

Getting to know your patient

Building trust at the introduction

- Make sure you have done a thorough chart review and discussed the patient with the main therapist prior to your first visit with them
- Summarize your current understanding of their situation when you meet them
- Review the plan for the day's session, what general exercise or treatment to expect, and what goal you are trying to accomplish that day
- Make sure you give them a chance to ask you questions. Do this with an open-ended format.
 - What questions do you have for me?
 - How is your knee feeling today Mrs. Smith?

Open ended questions

Comparing the following subjective reports, what can we do with the extra information in the second report?

- Patient is a 42-year-old male with low back pain. He says he is a 5/10 today. Says his weekend was good. Reports he is doing his HEP.
- Patient is a 42-year-old male with low back pain. Reports going for a two mile walk over the weekend with his wife and kids. Says he needed several breaks due to his backpain along the way. Reports he enjoys the child's pose exercise, but the bird dogs hurt his back too much to do consistently. Says his back muscles feel tight and rate his pain as a 5/10, about his normal levels per the patient

Examples of useful substitutions to use in the clinic

• How was your weekend?	• What did you do this weekend?
• Are you doing your home exercise plan?	• What do you think of your home exercise plan so far?
• Do you have any questions?	• What questions do you have for me?
• What is your pain on a scale of one to ten?	• What does your pain feel like today?

Body language

Main points to consider

- Meeting the patient at their level, don't stand over them while they are laying on a table, grab a stool or kneel to talk to them from here
- Face the patient to keep verbal communication easy and to observe their facial expressions

Payoff

Why go through these steps to improve communication?

- Personalizes the rehab plan
- Improves patient adherence
- This makes your work more meaningful
- Provides a deeper understanding of your more difficult patients

Remember the basics

- Show them you are prepared
- Lead with open ended questions and use closed ended ones for the details
- Keep yourself square and level to your patient, when possible, to maintain that physical line of communication